

The Church School Teacher

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THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER

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COVER: A lesson in steward-
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From Your Director

by LAEL H. WESTBERG
Augustana Lutheran Church

THIS month's cover stresses stewardship. It is an early introduction to *Parish Education Month 1957*, as is Sam Edwin's article in this issue, "I'm a Puppy."

For *Parish Education Month 1957* will link stewardship with education. The theme will be *Give Yourself*. The poster will be a striking contemporary illustration of Christ on the Cross. It will remind us of our Lord who gave Himself for us. It will ask us to take up our cross and follow Him by giving *ourselves*. Five tracts will spell it out in detail.

Give Yourself in Worship

Give Yourself in Study

Give Yourself in Teaching

Give Yourself in Giving

Give Yourself in Witnessing

Next summer two copies of the poster along with samples of the tracts will be mailed to each church. Additional copies will be available at nominal cost. In addition each congregation will be

supplied with copies of a new pamphlet on stewardship and education written by Dr. Elmer Homrighausen of Princeton Theological Seminary. We hope the article will be used as resource material for Parish Education Month sermons and for study sessions held by church teachers and church councils.

Tracts for P. E. Month may be ordered immediately, if you like, but delivery will be made next summer.

Merge Educational Program

This FYD column is being written at Columbus, Ohio, where I am attending a meeting which has just launched the Cooperative Long Range Program for Parish Education. U.L.C.A., E.L.C., American, Augustana, U.E.L.C., Lutheran Free, A.E.L.C. and Suomi—all these are represented, each having approved the Long Range proposal. Two days we have worked forging the basic organization. Soon America's Lu-

therans will sing from a common hymnal. In a few more years they will study in a common curriculum.

Augustana men have important parts in the new organization. Pastor Frank Bonander of Worthington, Minnesota was just elected as chairman of one of the four central committees, the Committee on Field Work. Pastor Marvin Raymond of Galesburg, Illinois has been elected chairman of another, the Committee on Finance. Both men have been made members of the executive board of the new organization.

Readers of *The Church School Teacher*, pray for this new parish education program. Pray that it may become an effective tool for the church schools of America's Lutheran congregations.

A Total Program

The Long Range Program will cover not only Sunday school needs but vacation church school, released time school, camping, confirmation instruction, etc. In short, it will be a comprehensive total program for parish education. Such a program will need the help of the finest minds available. We will wish to consult Lutherans who are qualified in educational psychology, general education, Christian education, systematic theology and sociology. You can help us immeasurably if you will

send me the names of Lutherans teaching in colleges and universities, persons qualified in the above areas. One of the first conferences of such experts will meet July 1957, so we need the names soon.

Next summer will be a busy time for America's Lutherans. We will be entertaining our brothers and sisters from all corners of the earth meeting in Minneapolis during August for the *Lutheran World Assembly*. During August many delegates and official visitors to the *Assembly* will engage in conferences and seminars on all kinds of subjects.

The Family

Of special interest to parents and educators will be the Seminar on *The Family and Christian Education*. Some fifty persons from America and other countries will meet for five days at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, to present papers and hold discussions on such topics as *The Theology of Marriage, How Can We Rebuild the Family Altar, The Theology of Divorce and Remarriage, Mixed Marriages and the Divided Home, Causes of Divorce, The Christian Interpretation of Sex, Preparing Parents for Their Task in Sex Education, The Family as an Educational Institution*.

The findings will be published so all interested persons may share in the conference.

Director's Column

by R. A. VOGLEY
American Lutheran Church

MANY important meetings have been held or will soon be held.

On December 10 and 11 the Boards of Parish Education of the American Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church met to discuss their present programs, the rules and regulations established by the Joint Union Committee, and the board procedures and work in anticipation of merger.

On January 8 and 9 the first official meeting of the boards participating in the Program for Long Range Cooperation in Parish Education was held.

On February 8-15 the annual meeting of the Division of Education of the National Council of Churches will be held at Cincinnati, Ohio.

On February 18-20 the Board of Parish Education of the American Lutheran Church and representatives from each District Parish Education Committee will meet at Racine, Wisconsin. At that time information will be

given about our new church school feature papers, the new vacation school material for use in the summer of 1957 and the new Bible Storytime lessons. Specific directions will also be given for conducting a vacation school clinic.

Bible Storytime Lessons

The editors are making every effort to complete the preparation of the lesson material in our new series of lessons for children in the nursery and the kindergarten departments and their parents.

We believe that home-church cooperation can be immeasurably strengthened through parents' classes for parents of children who are in the preschool departments of our church schools. We urge every church to begin to make plans now for organizing a new parents' class in the fall.

The Weekday Church School

The course of study for our junior age children for this semester is entitled "Worship in My Church." In this course the children will learn many things about

why we worship and how we worship in our Lutheran church.

A New Course

Plans are being made for a new course for use in the weekday program next fall. The Board of Parish Education has authorized the preparation of a course on Christian vocations. We feel that the church should sow early the seeds of Christian service. This can be done in our weekday church school program, especially with children in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades and with those in the 7th, 8th, and 9th grades. We are considering the possibility of having a slightly different approach for boys and girls in the catechetical classes.

This particular course will highlight the different careers of service in church work, such as the pastor, the missionary, other mission workers, parish workers, and Christian day school teachers. It will also indicate important fields of service in the local congregation.

If your congregation does not have a regular weekly program for strengthening the preconfirmation instruction of your junior age children, discuss ways and means of establishing a regular weekday church school next fall.

A Serious Question

Do church school teachers truly realize the importance of their

God-given work in the ministry of teaching?

Why do I raise this question?

In reviewing the American Uniform evaluation forms, which in all probability are submitted by some of our most faithful teachers, I see again and again that the amount of time given to preparation varies from forty minutes to two hours. Of course, other reports indicate that some teachers spend from four to eight hours.

Can a teacher prepare adequately to teach even in two hours? How many teachers give less than forty minutes to their preparation? Why do some feel that even sixty minutes is enough? Is it because the lesson is "easy"? Does the teacher "know all about it"? Does the teacher think—"After all, it's only a routine Sunday school lesson"?

* * *

Do teachers realize how important it is for them to teach accurately and carefully and prayerfully so that week by week the members of their class are given opportunities to learn more about God's Word and to grow in their Christian faith and life? Do you realize the importance of your God-given work in the ministry of teaching?

The New Life in Christ

by ERIC H. WAHLSTROM

"**W**E are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10.

In these words Paul states clearly and forcefully that the new Christian life is created and given by God himself. God is the origin and source of all life. Physical life is his good and gracious gift. "God himself gives to all men life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:25). If we can speak of "a new life", the origin of that life also must be in God.

In Christ

Paul uses here an expression which we find so very often in his letters that it seems to be a formula. The Christian life is "in Christ" or "in the Lord." This formula occurs one hundred sixty-five times in Paul's letters. Some have wanted to interpret this statement in a mystical sense, implying that there is a close association and communion between the living Lord and the Christian. Such intimate fellowship with Christ in

meditation and prayer is indeed a part of the Christian's experience of the new life.

Life Because . . .

But Paul has a different reason for using this formula. It expresses in a very vivid manner the Christian's complete and utter dependence on the living Lord. What the Christian is and does, he is and does in dependence on Christ. "God has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing." Paul can say: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). The Christian lives because God creates and sustains his life through Jesus Christ the Lord.

This new life begins in a creative and redemptive act of God in Christ. The living Lord comes to us in the Word and in the sacraments to redeem us out of the power of sin and death. The apostle Paul describes this act of God by the use of various figures of

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speech. He says that we were dead in trespasses and sins, but God made us alive (Eph. 2:4,5). We were slaves under the power of sin and death, but God has redeemed us (Col. 1:13,14). We were enemies of God, but he has reconciled us and removed the enmity that separated us from him (Eph. 2:14-16). We were strangers and aliens, but God has adopted us and made us members of "the household of God" (Eph. 2:19). All these figures describe the same redemptive act of God. We were lost and helpless, but God has found us. We were dead, but God has made us alive.

This experience of the new life is predicated on the redemptive work of Christ in His death and resurrection. It was *in Christ* that God made us alive. Christ is the Victor over death and the Lord of Life. It might seem that in this present world death is the ultimate power. All living things die. All life is subject to death. But He who has died and risen again is the Lord of Life. The Easter message declares that life, not death, is the final power. The risen Christ has conquered death, and his victory assures us of life. "Because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19).

His Gracious Hand

Since the new life is created by an act of God in Christ, the

Christian's attitude to God can be characterized only by thanksgiving and praise. All that we are and all that we have are gifts from his gracious hand. We cannot really return anything to Him. But we can bow in adoration and worship and give thanks to Him for His wonderful works. "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." Humbly and gratefully we receive our life and all its blessings from Him. He gives us these blessings "without any merit or worthiness" on our part and therefore we are "in duty bound to thank, praise, serve and obey Him."

Obligated to Love

Our obedience and service, however, are directed primarily toward the neighbor. We may, of course, say that we serve God by serving our neighbor, but that implies that the neighbor is the immediate object of our concern. Jesus summed up the meaning of the law in two commandments: love to God and love to the neighbor. "On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets" (Mt. 22:40), i.e., the whole Bible and the whole will of God. Paul makes a similar statement. Any commandment whatsoever it might be is "summed up in this sentence, You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Rom. 13:9). To live the Christian life means that we

recognize God as our God on whose good and gracious will our whole life depends, and that we also recognize the obligation to love our neighbor which he has placed upon us.

One Body

This love toward the neighbor means that we are actively concerned for the temporal, spiritual and eternal welfare of our fellow men. The love and care which God pours out upon us are to overflow, as it were, to all the people with whom we associate. We do not live alone; we are members one of another.

It is instructive to study the various admonitions which Paul gives to his converts in his letters. All of these admonitions are concerned with their relationship to one another. Read for example Rom. 12:1-14. He does not ask them for any spectacular works, but he admonishes them to be humble, patient, generous, hospitable, compassionate, obedient to civil authorities and concerned for the weaker brothers. The vices which he asks them to "put off" are such practices as immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covetousness, anger, malice, slander and lying (Col. 3:5-8). All these are related to their social life. They are the characteristics of "the old man" who is to be "put to death." Instead they are to

"put on" such virtues as "compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive" (Col. 3:12,13).

It is easy to see where Paul has received the ideal of the Christian life. The Christian has a "new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col. 3:10). The pattern is Christ. "Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). As he loved us and gave himself for us, so we are to love and serve our fellow men.

Forever, the Struggle

It is obvious that the apostle expects that his converts will follow his instructions. He knows that they are not perfect. They must struggle against the desires and impulses of "the old man." But he expects them to grow and make progress. They are not to remain forever in the same spot fighting the same old battles. In fact, Paul was horrified to learn that his converts had quarrels and dissensions among themselves. Such sins denied the reality of the new life.

The Christian is not perfect, and he has to confess his sins before God, as we do in the confes-

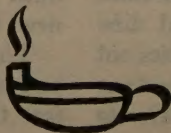
sion of sin in the worship service. But this is not to become an excuse for continuing in sin. If a man has a bad temper, he can overcome it by the grace of God. The Christian is free from sin, but this means that he is free to struggle against it and overcome it. What Paul wants them to conquer is their pride and their concern with self. All is of grace, therefore no one has anything to boast of before others. All is of grace, therefore the Christian may trust in God for himself and devote his life to the service of his fellow men.

Just how this service is to be carried out depends on the circumstances. The needs and demands of the neighbor are as varied as life itself. The opportunities for service come to us by chance, just as the good Samaritan "came by chance that way." There are many things which have to be taken into consideration, but the general principle, stated both by Jesus and Paul, is clear enough: God's will for us is that we shall be actively concerned for the temporal, spiritual and eternal welfare of our neighbor. In this gen-

eral statement all the commandments of God are comprehended and the pattern given to the Christian life.

This is not an easy pattern to live by even for the Christian. It is difficult to know at times just what should be done to promote the genuine welfare of the neighbor. We may have to bring the judgment of God to bear upon his life. But the most difficult is the concern of "the old man" for his own comfort and interests. Luther uses almost violent terms when he says that "the old man must be drowned and destroyed by daily sorrow and repentance." That experience is both difficult and painful.

But we need not despair. The living Lord himself is present with us with his quickening Spirit. All the resources of Almighty God are available for us. The Christian life rests on the victory of Christ, and in his name we, too, shall gain the victory. "He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne" (Rev. 3: 21).



"Am I a Puppy?"

by SAM EDWINS



A LITTLE girl came home one warm fall afternoon from her first day at kindergarten. Her mother, interested in the first day's accomplishments, inquired as to what she might have learned. The daughter informed her mother that she had been learning about herself. When questioned as to who she was, the little girl answered very thoughtfully and seriously, "I think I am a puppy, but, Mommy, I really don't know what I am."

Real Questions

Stewardship education together with parish education is concerned with the question of every girl, boy, youth, and adult as to who they are and how they relate to the purposes and plans of God. "Who am I? Why am I here? What am I supposed to do?"—these are real questions. They are questions which must be answered. To be able to provide the answers to the "whys," to be able to give direction, purpose, understanding, and appreciation for our very ex-

istence, we must come to grips with what the Bible teaches about stewardship.

What is Christian stewardship? Fundamentally, it is the Christian's response to God's grace. It is a response of faith and love and concern. This response is active in that it seeks ways to express that faith and love not only by loving God but by loving our neighbor as we love ourselves. It is responsive in that it cannot remain static. It grows in its responsiveness. As water which breaks through a dike will slowly tear away the restraint of rock and dirt until it is pouring out a flood upon the land, so also will our responsiveness grow when motivated by the tremendous pressures of God's limitless grace. It is responsible love, knowing that it can accept or reject the love and the power and the resources of almighty God. It is accountable love because God makes it possible for the Christian

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to give as freely as he has received. He has no excuse except his will-full disobedience.

The total life is involved. All of a child's time, abilities, and possessions, a child's capabilities and potentials are involved. Think of the possibilities of what a child might become if totally committed and used by God. Yet, the subtle relationship of parents to children, of teacher to pupil, of playmate to playmate, of adult to child—all are teaching, molding, and setting habit patterns. How tremendously important that parents and teachers, in fact the entire congregation, understand their stewardship responsibility. They are partners with God in the development of these precious lives. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

Resources

"What do we have to work with?", you ask. We have more than we might at first realize. *Children have possessions*, material things, such as, food, clothing, toys, pets, books, and equipment. They also have intangible possessions, such as, love, care, consideration, opportunities, responsibilities, and attitudes. All of these are the result of someone's love, labor, and careful provision. But behind man's work is God, the creator and provider. It is easy to

give God credit for the great incomprehensibles, such as, the sun, moon, and stars, but to see God in a piece of bread, in our breakfast toast, means that we must get behind the scenes. Man, in buying a loaf of bread, has only repaid man for his work. We are not indebted to man, but we are in debt to God for the minerals and vitamins, the life and health in the wheat. It is a free gift from God.

Importance of Now

Children have time and abilities. Habit patterns in a child's life are first formed by the use of time—time to eat, time to go to bed, time to play, time to worship and pray, time for school and for a holiday. But time needs to be related to God. The importance of *now* needs to be stressed. To be sure they need to prepare for life by growing, sleeping, eating and studying; but life is not all in the future. God wants the *now* time to be used to His glory. Eternity has no past nor future. It is an everlasting now.

Procrastination may have its inception in this habit formed in childhood of just getting ready. I wonder if children don't become dominated by the idea that they aren't capable "yet." Therefore, they don't attempt to do those things which have become associated with adult abilities. God has given them time for preparation,

yes, but also for service now.

Children's abilities are important, those hidden as well as the obvious. The capabilities, the potentialities of the child, need attention. Abilities give direction as to where God wants to place the child in life. Abilities can direct toward an occupation, but to discover the potentials, the child needs to catch a sense of mission of Christian vocation. It is at this point that the parent, teacher, and pastor play such an important role.

Money Is Life

Children have money. Money is merely a medium of exchange. It is time and ability turned into cash. But because it represents time and ability, it represents life. In fact, money is life if properly understood. The offering becomes the time for the response of self. It is a "living sacrifice." It is a person's life on God's altar. How important that children offer their *earnings* on God's altar, not someone else's. It isn't money God needs on His altars but lives dedicated to Him. This will necessitate understanding, appreciation, and cooperation on the part of parents as well as teachers, so that children can place an offering on God's altar which represents their time, their abilities and their life.

How out of place to announce the offering as the means to pay bills or to enable the children to

get their papers. Lives (money) are given to God out of love and gratitude, to be used for the *total* work of the kingdom. The offerings should go to the congregational treasurer so that the children's offerings will reach and serve *every* facet of Church life at home and around the world. On the other hand, the congregation should underwrite the Sunday school expenses regardless of the income from the Sunday school offerings. The Sunday school is not an auxiliary of the congregation. It is part of the congregation and should participate in its total work. Children need to be taught to give to God through the Church.

Not Easy

Children have covetousness. We glorify God for our redemption but we dare not forget that each one, child and adult, is a redeemed sinner. We have a natural tendency to be selfish and covetous. This is idolatry. This is sin. Although God's grace is sufficient for this self-centeredness, the sin will have to be fought all of our lives. Children need to understand this fact. Otherwise, they fail to understand the difficulty of putting God first. It isn't easy. It never will be easy, as long as we are mortals, to be good stewards and seek the kingdom first. But God has resources of grace upon

which we are to depend. The awareness, the consciousness of sin must drive us to Christ. Children need to be helped in their struggle with selfishness in all of its ramifications.

The Everlasting Task

Children have environment. Parents, brothers and sisters, playmates, neighbors, teachers—all are influencing the child by their attitudes and practices. If parents “gripe” about helping a neighbor, if they take advantage of a person to their own gain, if the “important” things in the family life are not God’s things, a child becomes rather frustrated between what goes on in Sunday school on Sunday and what happens at home on Monday. Here is an everlasting task not only for the Sunday school teacher but for the entire congregation.

How can we teach stewardship? First by understanding what the Bible teaches about stewardship and then by the teacher seeing himself or herself as a Christian steward. It must be more than theory. It must give the teacher a sense of purpose and direction, a sense of mission. It must help him to see God’s great purposes for all men including the lives of the children in his care.

Second by relating our teaching to God’s Word and making use of the lesson for the day. Whenever

we can teach response to God’s grace and relate it to faithful service to God and our fellow men, we are teaching stewardship. It would be helpful to review the lessons in each department in advance and suggest to each other the stewardship lessons which can be developed. These should not be forced. Let them be apparent. Otherwise they will be difficult to explain and the children will not understand. The Bible is full of specific teachings about stewardship. The Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, life situations in the Old and New Testaments—all provide stewardship lessons.

Response

Third by helping the pupil to put his knowledge into action. It is not enough to develop a detached understanding of a stewardship principle. It must become part of the living habits of the child, or it is not response.

Many acts of individual service come to mind, such as taking over the paper route for a sick friend, reading regularly to a blind person, baby sitting for someone who needs the help but is unable to pay for it. Care must be taken that the good being done is Christ and Church related. It must witness to God’s love, mercy, and providence in order that God may get the credit and glory.

Group projects are always good. These should be short. Plan together for the project, accomplish it, then evaluate the results. To determine real avenues of service will mean going to God in prayer for guidance and illumination. Working at it will necessitate patience, love, and all the resources God puts at our disposal. Evaluating it will mean the struggle of attempting to ascertain the intangibles of spiritual growth. Projects may be either church or community centered. They should be

done for the purpose of serving, not for the purpose of raising money for the class or Sunday school. Serving is giving, not getting.

No, little girl, you are not a puppy. You are a child of God. You are able to choose, able to respond to God's love and providence and power. Your life can be real, worthwhile, joyous, and abundant if it is given away in love and service to glorify God. Living is giving, and giving is loving—for God's steward.

Stewardship is to the Christian life and the Christian Church what a mainspring is to a watch. A watch cannot run without a mainspring. A Church cannot "go," however vigorously we may shake it, without a dynamic motive.

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His Idea — Guide Its Expression

by ELLA M. OSTEN

LAST month we began the discussion of various types of activity by means of which a person can express what he is thinking and feeling. Drawing was the first activity selected. It is probably suggested more often in lesson materials than any other activity. Drawing is also a part of many other expressional activities such as painting and construction.

Drawing is a good activity to be used in the Sunday church school since it lends itself to the limited schedule of the Sunday morning session and can be used with various age groups. Another advantage is that few materials are needed, a box of crayons and large sheets of paper being the basic requirements.

Painting

Painting is closely related to drawing. Many of the principles we discussed in last month's article apply to painting also. There are, however, some other factors which a church school teacher will need to consider when planning to use painting as an activity.

Painting, like drawing, is used to tell a story. Painting also en-

ables a person to tell how he feels about a situation. Large sweeping motions of the brush or hand (as in finger painting) and splashes of strong color help to express feelings of excitement, gaiety, or depression. The unusual freedom experienced when using paint enables one to express more of the imaginative and idealistic.

More time is required for this activity than for drawing. Painting also demands more preparation. More materials are needed. Painting is an activity which lends itself more easily to the schedule of the vacation or weekday church school session than to that of the Sunday morning session.

Age Group Variations

Pupils of all age groups enjoy painting and should be encouraged to express their ideas through this medium. Kindergarten and primary children will need some help on how to care for the brushes and how to manage the paint. Primary children may have learned how to mix colors in school and should be encouraged to experiment to find

Mrs. Osten is a member of the ALC Board of Parish Education Staff.

the color they want to use. As a rule, children should be encouraged to paint with the brush directly on the paper and not be required to paint within lines such as a printed outline drawing.

Beginning with the latter part of the third grade pupils are interested in more detail and an exact likeness. Now they may lightly outline the picture they wish to paint, with chalk or pencil, and then fill in the color. As stated in the previous article, chalk erases easily from paper thus making it possible to correct the design until the desired outline is achieved.

Juniors and junior high pupils have the muscular control and the skill needed to do finer work such as illustrations for a booklet or a chart. They are better able to manage and use transparent water colors as well as the tempera paints. They can also do lettering and sketching with ink.

How to Do It

As you read the above you may say to yourself, "It sounds good, but—how can I guide my class in a painting activity?"

Let us suppose that this summer you will be having a series of lessons on the Lord's Prayer in your vacation church school. You are to teach a class of juniors. What activity can you plan for your class? For your class? No; *with* your class. The first step to successful

and purposeful activity which will hold the interest of the class is to permit them to share in the planning. Of course you have done some careful planning ahead of time, too. You have studied the lessons and have a good idea of what can be done. You have arranged to have such materials as paper, brushes, paint, and crayons on hand. But, you need to discuss activity plans with your class and guide them to select an activity related to the lessons they will be studying.

The Class Plans

The first day of vacation school arrives and you have your first session. You have talked about the things you will be studying for the next weeks. You may have discussed such questions as "What does it mean to pray?" "Why is prayer important?" Now you might ask, "What can we do or make to help us remember what we are learning?" "How can we share what we learn with others?" Suggestions will come from the class. "We could make a booklet of prayers"; "We could each write a prayer we know and bring it to class"; "We could paint pictures of people praying"; and other ideas. As the various suggestions are given, one of the class could list them on blackboard or chart.

Under your guidance the class may now select the things they

want to do. Is there a blank space of wall where a series of pictures could be placed? Is there a shut-in who would enjoy receiving a booklet made by the group? Would each member of the class like a booklet of his own?

Work Begins

When the class has decided on the project, committees will need to be appointed. Some will begin sketching pictures. Others will gather materials, such as, pictures from magazines and prayers from the hymnbook. An interest corner may be planned where pictures, prayer booklets, hymnbooks, and other items may be displayed.

The next day work can begin on projects. All who enjoy painting and drawing will begin on their pictures. From these will be chosen the ones to be used for the wall panel or mural. Others will begin on their booklets. Prayers for different occasions must be written or gathered from sources such as the hymnal and prayer books. Some will compose prayers of their own. You might suggest that pupils exchange favorite prayers to help each one have a collection for his booklet.

The third day the class may be ready to begin work on the mural. Guide the group in planning the scenes to be painted. Divide the

strip of paper, which should be about two feet or more wide and as long as the wall space will permit, into sections and decide upon the general arrangement. Discuss the sketches which have been made. From these some may be selected or others may be needed. Several pupils may begin work on the mural, sketching in some general outlines with chalk. Thus, the work will continue from day to day, planning, sketching, arranging, then filling in with color and other details.

Many Uses

A mural is just one example of using painting in the church school. Paintings may be used in much the same way as drawings. The pictures used for the mural might also be made into a movie or TV and used as a part of the closing program of the vacation school. Paintings may be used to illustrate booklets, maps, and posters. They may also be used for backgrounds for displays or dioramas.

Planning is the key and ideas are the basis for varied and interesting activities which will be enjoyed by both the teacher and the pupils. One's imaginative powers grow with use. Let's stimulate our pupils and each other to make better use of this wonderful gift.

A Brief Survey of Old Testament Thought

by CARL A. ANDERSON

► Third in a Series

IN THE New Testament we are told that "since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"; and that "there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 5:1; 8:1). These statements assure us that we are accounted righteous in the sight of God through faith in Jesus Christ. The question is frequently asked: How were people of the Old Testament times saved? How were they accounted righteous? This is an interesting question, and also an important one, for the answer will help us to understand better what the New Testament means by such statements as those quoted above. We will understand more clearly what it means to be righteous in the sight of God.

The terms "righteous" and "righteousness" occur about 400 times in the Old Testament. This indicates how prominent the thought expressed by these words was in the minds of the Old Testament believers. A study of the

various passages in which these words occur indicates that they have various shades of meaning which are not restricted to the meaning we usually associate with them.

When we speak of a person as being righteous we usually think of him as one who has measured up to a right standard. It may be in the realm of civil law, in which case it would be perfect obedience to the law; or, if it pertains to social custom, it would have reference to doing what is socially accepted. Most of the time we use these words in the religious sense as having reference to moral and ethical perfection. In the Old Testament these words are used with reference to all of these areas of life.

The Old Testament abounds in statements declaring that there are righteous people (Gen. 6:9; Is. 5:23; Ezek. 3:20,21). On the

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other hand there are passages which declare that man cannot be righteous before God. In the Book of Job one of Job's friends argues with Job: "Can mortal man be righteous before God?" (4:17). Job also makes the statement: "How can a man be just before God?" (9:2), by which he means that man cannot defend his righteousness if he were to stand trial before God. Ps. 14:3 declares "There is none good, no, not one." These statements are not a contradiction to the claim that there are righteous people, but are an indication that the term "righteous" means something more than measuring up to a law or standard in many instances. It is interesting to notice that in the Book of Job this man is described as a righteous man (blameless and upright) in chapter 1:1. At the end of the book he appears to be a repentant man because he has spoken presumptuously, and as such he is acceptable to God (42:8).

Psalmist's Description

Certainly the word "righteous" has reference to moral conduct. But when it has reference to the question of being righteous before God, it refers to something more than conduct. Let us examine a few passages. Ps. 34 is a good example. The Psalmist declares that he blesses the Lord, praises the Lord, boasts in the Lord, seeks the

Lord, magnifies the Lord, cries to the Lord, fears the Lord. Then he declares that he has experienced how good the Lord is (v. 17-18). So his conclusion is: "The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry" (v. 15). The Psalmist's description of himself is a description of a relationship and a fellowship with God. This relationship determined his conduct.

A Matter of Faith

In Habakkuk 2:4 it is stated: "The righteous shall live by his faith." This statement occurs in the Lord's answer to the prophet's problem. It emphasizes that righteousness is a matter of faith in God. In Psalm 112 is another description of the righteous man. Yes, the emphasis seems to be on what he does, but the Psalm begins by stating that he is a "man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments." This term "greatly delights" presupposes a relationship of faith, love, devotion, and allegiance to God, which have become determinative for his conduct, and have made him just what he is.

These passages remind us of the covenant relationship discussed in a previous article. In fact, he who was in covenant relationship with God in the true sense of the word was regarded as righteous. He belonged to God. Such a one was

conscious of what God had already done for him. He had experienced God's steadfast love and mercy. He was moved thereby to respond to God in faith, love, devotion and obedience. Thus he was moved by his attitude and feeling toward God to do those things which he knew were according to God's will, and abstain from those things which were evil. This is the mood expressed in Psalm 1 and 119.

Conscious of Sin

The Old Testament believer was also conscious of his sinful human nature. This is indicated not only by the penitential Psalms, but by the various words which are used in the Old Testament to express the concept of sin. The faithful were subject to sin and to them it was a grievous matter. Psalms like 51, 32, and 139:23-24 illustrate how they really felt about it. The Mosaic Covenant had made provision for dealing with unintentional sinning. In Leviticus, chapters 4, 5, and 6, we read concerning the sin offerings and the trespass offerings. These sacrifices were a sort of confessional at which the sinner made a confession of his sin. The sacrifice was then slain and the priest made atonement for the sin, acting as a mediator in behalf of God. The sinner was forgiven. The condition for this forgiveness was repentance. In this way the faithful Hebrew

was to be preserved in the covenant relationship. Willful and intentional sinning, however, constituted defection from God. A person committing such sin placed himself outside of the covenant (Num. 15:30), and the sacrifice was not intended as a way of reinstatement for him.

As time went on the Hebrew people abused the use of the sacrifices and observed them as a ritual, a legal requirement. The idea of repentance almost disappeared. Then when the writing prophets appeared we find that they denounced the sacrifices as they were practiced, and placed the emphasis on repentance and a return to faith in God (cf. Is. 1:18-20; Jer. 3:11-14; Micah 6:1-8; etc.) With them righteousness consisted in being in a right relationship with God as a condition for obedience to the will of God. They appealed to their people to return to God in faith, and to seek His Grace and Mercy in order to be restored into the state of righteousness. This prophetic view is concretely shown in Ps. 51:16-17.

A Forgiven Sinner

A righteous person was therefore not one who had committed no sin for such a one did not exist. Rather, he was one who acknowledged his sin before God and obtained forgiveness. This concept is illustrated in a rather remarkable

manner in Solomon's prayer of dedication in 1 Kings 8:46-53. See also Ps. 130 and 143:1-2.

Thus we may sum up our answer to the question: what constituted being righteous in the Old Testament? The righteous man was the one who by faith was in a right fellowship with God, so that God was truly his God, Who created him, provided for him, protected him and was his light and

salvation; Whom he loved, held in reverence, obeyed and before Whom he was repentant for all his sins. It was a personal heart relationship to God. It was this kind of righteousness which Jesus referred to when in the Sermon on the Mount He said: "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20).

Very few seem to know that the Christian life is not merely a way to be good, or to find fellowship with other human beings whose hearts also long. Very few seem to realize that a Christian is not one who can snap his prayer-fingers and God will obey. Few seem to realize that being a Christian is not simply being sure you are going to receive whatever you conceive as heaven. Or not going to whatever you conceive as hell.

Very few seem to know that being a Christian is Christ living in us right now. *A Christian is one in whom Jesus Christ lives right now!*

EUGENIA PRICE, in
Early Will I Seek Thee

Radical Departure Still Successful

By ELIZABETH M. PETERSON

Five years ago Augustana's Gladstone, Michigan church took a radical step to solve its problems of time and space. It moved its church school out of the tempestuous Sunday morning to the week days. Now, half a decade later, Gladstone is glad it did so. Elizabeth Peterson, wife of the church's pastor, does the reporting.

TWO of the most common problems which face workers with children and youth is that they do not have adequate time or suitable rooms for the most successful teaching program. Our weekday church school plan has helped us solve these two problems. Our schedule is as follows:

Saturday 9:00-9:50

Youth Choir

Saturday 10:00-11:00

Kindergarten Dept.

Primary Dept.

Junior Dept.

Tuesday 3:45-5:15

Junior Confirmation class

Wednesday 3:45-5:15

Senior Confirmation class

Tuesday 7:30-8:45

Luther League Bible class

With the exception of the Youth Choir and the Junior classes which meet in the church, and the Kindergarten Department which meets in the social rooms of the

church, all other classes are held in the parish house.

Our plan has given the teachers greater freedom by relieving them of undue crowding and by permitting time for the introducing or the completing of activities which add greatly to the understanding of and the interest in the lessons and units. The teacher who meets with her class on a weekday is free of much of the tensions and rush that often are on Sunday; and, therefore, she is in a more receptive attitude for the worship service.

Real Deacons

Our deacons have been very helpful since we have made them aware of our problems. After the men had attended one of our teachers' meetings in January they decided to begin a remodeling and redecorating project at the parish house. (The parish house was

the parsonage until two years ago. At present the sexton lives on the second floor and the first floor serves as class rooms.) The attractive rooms have added considerably to a more successful teaching program. At our first meeting this year we told the deacon who met with us of the problem of noises which carry up through the social rooms into the church. The deacon presented our problem to the Brotherhood, and at present the churchmen are busy replacing the old metal ceiling with an acoustical tile which we anticipate will solve another problem. Since the Board of Deacons "is responsible for the efficient promotion of parish schools on Sundays, weekdays, and during

vacations," we call upon these men to help us clear up our difficulties. The faculty alone cannot do all that is necessary to achieve the best teaching program.

Another help, we have found is means by which the parents' interest is maintained through the use of tracts about Christian education. These are distributed at the services from time to time, but some have been mailed to the home. Soon we will mail last year's attendance card No. 101 to the parents, and we will include the child's record of his weekly offerings and monthly mission offerings. The parents must be made aware of their contributions to the Christian education program, too.



For Directors of Christian Education

► Counseling Opportunities in the Church School

by RUTH ERICKSON

THOSE of us in charge of church school are actually frightened by the many opportunities for counseling. Frightened? Why? Because if we are conscientious and discerning, we realize how inadequate we are, how limited is our time, and how important in God's sight is each and every person. Today there are many technical definitions of counseling, but the one appropriate for us Christian workers is that counseling is the art (not the science) of being *concerned* with each person. From such a definition counseling may be a part of an informal meeting or a planned interview. As Christians we like this concept because no one was more concerned about persons than Christ Himself. He never worried about profound theological dogmas nor set up elaborate church school organizations, important as each

might be in its place, but He did love the individual Mary or Peter. The consecrated Christian worker knows that in dealing with others he is not alone—that as he yields himself to Christ's guidance, he will be able to help others.

We might well ask ourselves, "What are we talking about when we mention counseling opportunities?" Take just a few examples in the church school.

On an October Sunday a bewildered and frustrated teacher has a ten year old boy out in the church school hall. She says to us, "I don't know what is the matter with Johnny. He's just impossible. He won't sit still and he disturbs the other children." Looking at Johnny who is somewhat afraid and yet openly defiant, we know that his mother has deserted the family and that his busy father and impersonal housekeeper do not take the time to give the love and affection the lad so sorely needs. In front of Johnny we cannot

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say much, but we mentally note that here is opportunity to talk to the teacher privately; to make a call by phone, or better yet go in person to the home; and to make friends with Johnny at informal times. Now we had better not only *intend* but we had better carry out our intentions.



Tuesday morning brings a telephone call to inform us that a new teacher, a young single girl, will not continue with her class. We are inclined to be provoked that she accepted the job in the first place; we smother the feeling of irritation, and in genuine concern keep up a friendly conversation. Soon our teacher friend feels that we are truly interested in her problem—not ours—and she reveals that recently an invalid mother has come to stay with her in a small apartment. She does want to help her mother, but she does not see how, in her busy schedule of working in an insurance office, of keeping up a social calendar, and of participating in church activities, she can do everything. Before we know it we have

her real problem—the problem of resentment against other sisters whom she thinks ought to be helping. We know now that she must discontinue her teaching for the time being, but we also have helped her to see that her inner bitterness has not hurt anyone but herself. We hang up the receiver after a half hour's interruption in a busy morning, happy over having turned a young woman's eyes to Christ who forgives and who gives strength. She knew Him in the first place; however she fell into the sin so many of us do in forgetting His presence when we need Him most.

The phone in a few minutes brings us an upset teacher who is unhappy over the church school material we are using because she is not able to complete the entire lesson assigned. We know this teacher to be an over-conscientious perfectionist who has not truly accepted God's gift of salvation and is trying by exact works to gain His favor. We tell her that the material should be used creatively—that there is meant to be more than enough and that she should use that part which she can best teach, which interests her the most, and which meets the needs of her particular age group. She hangs up the phone relieved that she does not have to worry about such unattainable goals as she has set for herself and her class.

And so we could go on, for every parish worker knows the varied demands and opportunities for counseling with parent, child, and teacher. We know that for the most part we are untrained in the art of counseling and that we don't set up ourselves as specialists. However, there are certain basic principles which might well be considered by the parish worker.

First: We must be good listeners. Most church staff workers are articulate in expressing themselves, and are inclined to talk too much. It is important to the person with a problem that someone gives him complete attention, now and then asks a discerning question, and encourages him to think out his own solutions. Such an attitude of listening on our part helps the troubled person see his difficulty in a more realistic way.

Second: We should not become emotionally involved. Not showing anger, shock, or too much concern gives the person we are counseling a feeling of reassurance and objectivity toward his own problem.

Third: We cannot pry into the lives of those with whom we come in contact. We may only receive what a person freely gives to us. Along with this principle comes the grave responsibility that we maintain a professional attitude in not discussing with others what we have learned. It shows emotional immaturity on our part to divulge

confidences. We ourselves would not want help from someone who talked about us in public as "that interesting case."

Fourth: We should direct serious counseling problems to the pastor. He is the shepherd of the flock. As we call in homes, people will confide in us what they ordinarily would to a minister. As a parish worker we should not take personal satisfactions in these confidences and try to "solve them" ourselves.



Fifth: We must know the presence of God in Christ. When we feel discouraged or inadequate in helping others, let us remember we are not God—just one of His helpers. We are not alone. "Flash" prayers to Him even in the midst of a conversation can do wonders in guiding us what to say—or not to say—what to do next.

As we directors of Christian education work more closely with "persons," we will find more and more counseling opportunities.

A Visit to a Nursery Class

by MARIE SHUPE

LET us go, in our imagination, to a nursery class on an average Sunday morning. It is scheduled for an hour beginning at 9:30. The staff consists of the head teacher, Mrs. Barr, two assisting teachers, Miss Wayne and Mrs. Brown, and two general helpers, Mrs. Wright and Mrs. Fry.

They're Ready

As usual, Mrs. Barr is first to arrive, but by 9:15 the entire staff is present. They have removed their hats and coats and are ready for the early-comers.

Mrs. Wright and Mrs. Fry take over complete supervision of the room and see that everything is in readiness.

Miss Wayne and Mrs. Brown assist with wraps, see that each child puts his offering in the basket, and help those who need help to get adjusted to the group and the classroom activity.

Mrs. Barr is thus left free to give all of her attention to the arriving children, to greet them unhurriedly, to speak for a moment with parents who brought their children.

By the time the last child has

come, and Mrs. Barr is ready to give her attention to the group, she finds most of the children busy at something of interest.

Timid Sandy goes immediately to the toy shelf to find the fuzzy brown bear that seems to make her feel at home while the more aggressive Douglas looks around to find something new with which to experiment. Quiet little Jeff finds a picture book while vivacious Jane bounces the large rubber ball. Several seem to prefer to sit on chairs and watch the others.

Miss Wayne and Mrs. Brown move unobtrusively among the children, sometimes saying nothing, sometimes making suggestions, sometimes stepping in when there seems need for discipline. They encourage the children to engage in some activity but do not urge them. They know that for some children sitting still and watching is their best way of learning at the moment.

It's Time to Begin

Time to begin what? There may be those who think that teachers are either wasting precious

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time in this period or are merely marking time until the group has assembled and they can begin to teach. Experienced nursery teachers know how far both assumptions are from being correct.

Children are learning and adults are teaching from the moment of the first child's arrival. The children learn certain intangibles from the influence of the Christian personality of teachers and the general Christian atmosphere of the room and its surroundings. They learn from their peers to respect the rights and persons of others. They learn from the informal guidance of teachers to be kind, to share, to work in groups, to be friendly and unafraid, and many other Christian traits. They learn to enjoy the Sunday church school and, indirectly, to love the church.

Yes, sometime between 9:30 and 9:45 it is time to begin a more organized class procedure, but it is past time to *begin to teach*.

It's Time for Sunday School

In the nursery child's language this means finding a chair and sitting with the assembled group. There may be a few stragglers each week, but most of the children look forward to this time and are willing to put away the toys at a given signal.

This is a time of happy fellowship. They sing a song or two. Several children have something

to tell or show. Mrs. Fry checks attendance and mentions that Mary will be four on Tuesday. They sing a birthday song for her. Finally Mrs. Barr calls attention to the pictures and says, "I wonder if you saw these pictures of children. You know Jesus loves all children, everywhere."

It's Time to Worship

But a feeling of worship cannot be turned on by making this announcement! They sing "Jesus Loves Me" and as Mrs. Barr opens the Bible at the marked place she tells the children that the Bible really does tell them that Jesus loves them and shows them where He says, "Let the children come to me." Several children take turns holding the Bible as they all say Jesus' words.

Next Mrs. Barr picks up the offering basket and says, "Have you all put your offering in? I want to ask Jesus to bless it." After a brief simple prayer, they sing "Jesus Loves Me" once more.

It's Time to Play

The entire assembly has taken five to seven minutes. The children were not still, but most of them did stay on their chairs. In the fellowship period they had a chance to talk and sing. They had a part in the worship. Even though their feelings of worship are brief and fleeting, they learn

something of the pattern of worship in their church and absorb something of its spirit. Now physical activity is called for.

Mrs. Wright and Mrs. Fry lead several action songs and rhymes in which most of the children join. Two-year-old Barbara is an only child who has had little opportunity to play with those of her own age. She stands on the sidelines but imitates the actions of the other children.

The last game leads the group to the story circle where the children and teachers sit on the floor. All but Miss Wayne. It is her time to tell the story. She sits on a low chair to be near the children where they can all see her face.

It's Time to Listen

This is the one part of the nursery session when the children are not expected to talk. It is *listening time*. Miss Wayne opens the Bible as she begins to tell the story of Jesus blessing the children. She tells it in a natural conversational tone. She paints mental pictures so vividly that the children live the brief story with her. Miss Wayne ends her story with, "Let's all be very quiet for a little while and think about Jesus and how He loves us." In a few moments she says softly,

"Thank You, Jesus, for loving all of us."

It's Time to Do Something

The children go to small tables. Miss Wayne and Mrs. Wright take charge of the two-year-olds and Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Fry work with the three-year-olds. Mrs. Barr supervises the activity of the entire department. They talk quietly at each table about the story and the picture card. The younger groups review the story by use of flannelgraph while the older groups play parts of it. Every child has a chance to participate in some way.

It's Time to Go Home

At each table the lesson theme is emphasized in closing. Each small group prays together a short closing prayer they have learned. It is time for wraps and good-bys. Mrs. Barr stays at the door until the last child has been called for and the last good-by has been said.

Another nursery class session has come to a close. The seed of the Word of God has once more been sown in the hearts and minds of a group of little children. And the teachers! Tired? Yes. But, you know the deep satisfaction that is theirs if you are a nursery church school teacher.



Unto the Least of These . . .

—An Article About the Slow Learner

by RUTH M. SWANSON

TWO years ago an article in the Child-Family Digest revealed that 12% of all school age children in the United States require special attention in their education. 675,000 of that 12% are classified as mentally retarded. These children are a definite part of society and the church has a responsibility to provide for their Christian growth.

Are any of these 675,000 members of your church school? If so, you are a part of the team of teachers concerned with improving its ministry to these intellectually different children.

What's the Difference?

The degrees of difference vary from that of the slow learner to the trainable mentally handicapped. To do effective work with exceptional children and be able to plan a program which will meet their needs, we must know how they differ from the so-called normal children.

The slow learners are those children who cannot, without

much guidance, accomplish as much as their classmates who apparently have greater mental capacity.

The Same Way

These slow learners develop physically and socially much as their classmates, but they are conspicuously different in their mental development. However, they learn in just the same way in which their classmates learn, but their ability to think, reason and come to conclusions will never develop to the extent or become as deep and comprehensive as that of their more fortunately endowed classmates.

Church school teachers, as well as other teachers, must be careful not to attach a stigma to the slow learner because he is not what they wish he were—like his normal classmates. Rather, accept

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him for what he is and plan lessons to give him opportunities for expression even though his mental developmental rate is slower than average.

Granted, it will involve more time and effort, but a church school teacher who is willing to forget some prejudices and put her imagination to work, will find working with slow learners a challenging and rewarding experience.

An Advantage

A church school class is small enough to permit each teacher to become well acquainted with her pupils and to recognize the abilities and limitations of each one. Slow learners will not be asked to do anything which is beyond their ability; neither will they be permitted to just sit. They will be given the opportunity to use and develop the abilities which they have.

It may be that some slow learners are able to do exceptional work with their hands. Capitalizing on that ability will give them a definite sense of belonging and contributing to the class and will spur them on to greater efforts. Perhaps one of these different ones has a better than average voice and would be able to fill a place in leading group singing. Being alert to their interests in working with them Sunday after Sunday will lead us to discover

latent talents which will compensate for what seems to be a lack of ability in other areas of learning.

Just as their more normal classmates, these slow learners respond to their teacher's praise and will strive to do what is expected of them. So, church school teacher, if you have a slow learner in your class, accept him for what he is and together with his classmates help him feel he is a vital part of the group. Recognize his limitations but also his abilities and encourage him to work to his full capacity. Remember that if given an opportunity and the kind of guidance which is adjusted to his capacity and developmental pattern, he will become a well-adjusted, co-operative and contributing member of society.

Many Are Educable

The educable mentally handicapped children are those who, even though their intelligence is too low for them to profit a great deal from a regular course of study, can develop socially and become competent in some occupation, if given special training.

These children will not be able to function on the academic level of their classmates, but in other areas of living, e.g., social, physical and emotional, they may be equal. If at all possible, such children should be integrated in

the church school with normal children. It may be, if their physical development warrants it, that such children will accomplish more if placed with children near their mental age rather than their chronological age.

The Major Concern

The teacher's major concern will be to encourage them to become contributing members of the group and to help their classmates think of them as part of the group, understanding and appreciating their contributions, even though it may be only taking charge of books and supplies.

The trainable mentally handicapped children present the greatest problem in the area of intellectual differences. Such children cannot be integrated into a regular church school class because they usually require constant supervision. Most churches would not have enough of these children to form a class. Such a class could be a community project with the participating churches sharing in providing the location, equipment, supplies and personnel.

The program for such a group would have social adjustment as its major emphasis. These children quickly become restless; therefore, the activities must have a great deal of variety and not too much time should be spent in any one activity.

In dealing with any of these different children the church school teacher must remember to (1) introduce some activities which they can perform as effectively as their classmates, (2) take steps to recognize each one's successes, and (3) strive for a group climate of understanding and appreciation of unusual qualities in others.

Mental retardation of a child in the family presents a personal problem to the parents. The church should assume part of the responsibility of helping them face their problem. They will need to be reminded of the fact that every human being is of infinite value in God's sight. They need to be helped to understand that their child is not a different kind of being, but that he differs only in having a lesser amount of the abilities possessed by other children.

A Greater Responsibility

If a child comes from a family where the parents' interest and understanding is at a low level, the teacher's responsibility becomes greater. Pressures resulting from this lack of understanding may lead to an emotional upset and influence the child's judgment of right and wrong. It may mean that he will strike back with misbehavior and later delinquency. Such a child needs help from the

outside—from adults who are interested in him. Church school teacher, you have a unique opportunity in giving this kind of help inasmuch as you and the parents have a common interest—the welfare of their child.

Accomplishments of the intellectually different should not be measured by the number of Bible verses or hymns learned or the

ability to retell a number of stories. Rather, consider the expression of faith in Christian living and adjustment. Growth can be as extensive in some areas as it is retarded in others. Teachers should recognize that even these, at least, intellectually speaking, are part of God's plan and give them the kind of help they need to further their Christian growth.

This year, 300,000 14-year-olds in Eastern Germany were pressured in every possible way to join Communist-sponsored Youth Dedication preparatory courses which conclude with a ceremony resembling Confirmation but the youths dedicate themselves to the State instead of affirming faith in God. The state has also instigated a "Name-giving Ceremony" to replace baptism and a "Marriage Ceremony" to replace church weddings. So far, the vast majority of Christians in the East Zone have resisted and denounced these measures, but the number of those who participate is steadily growing. The Church is slowly being reduced to a "core of the faithful," but the courageous witness of this "core" in their stand for Christ is an inspiration to the world. The mental and physical strain under which many of them live is something comfortable Westerners can only imagine.

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